

6. WHITETAILED EAGLES [*HALIAEETUS ALBICILLA*
(LINN.)] AT BHARATPUR, RAJASTHAN

At about 1500 hrs on December 6th, 1973, SCM was sitting by the edge of a road overlooking the wetlands of the Bharatpur reserve, when two adult Whitetailed Eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) came flapping over the trees and low over the water. The birds were watched for several minutes at a range of about 200 yards.

SCM returned about an hour later with PAD, MCR and CWW and the birds were then watched for about 20 minutes both sitting on low trees, on the ground and flying about.

They were massive eagles, with long, broad wings and very short wedge-shaped white tails, the short tail being almost hidden when the birds were at rest. In colour they were uniform dark brown with pale, buff-brown heads and necks. Tail pure white. The large bill was bright yellow, uniform with the cere and gape. Iris yellow. Legs and feet were naked and also bright yellow.

The birds were watched in the same place the following morning (7th) and again with Dr. Salim Ali on the morning of the 8th December 1973.

57, TEWKESBURY ROAD,
CARSHALTON,
SURREY, U.K.

P. A. DUKES

82, CLARENCE ROAD,
TORPOINT,
CORNWALL, U.K.

S. C. MADGE

OATLANDS, IFORD,
LEWES,
SUSSEX, U.K.

M. C. ROBINSON

203, TOWN LANE,
ASHFORD,
MIDDLESEX,
U.K.,

C. W. WESTWOOD

January 18, 1974.

7. A NOTE ON THE FEEDING OF THE SARUS CRANE
GRUS ANTIGONE ANTIGONE (LINNAEUS)

Three Sarus cranes were seen feeding on the 24th January, 1974 at 4.45 PM in the Keoladeo Ghana Sanctuary at Bharatpur. One of them was a subadult, in all probability the half-grown *young* of the adult pair.

The subadult bird was approximately three-fourths the size of the adult feeding besides it. The head and upper neck were yellow ochre, in place of the red of the adult. It had a few grey plumes on the crown, which in the adults form a grey patch.

The young bird could not find food on its own. The adults plunged their heads into the water which was a few inches deep, and probed the bottom with their bills for food. The young merely took the food directly from the bill of the adult or picked the surfaced food and swallowed it. The food, as observed through an 8 x 30 binoculars was on most occasions a small dark mass, which could have been a small crab? The period of immersion of the head in the water by the adult sarus crane was timed. It was timed on twenty occasions and on most occasions it was five seconds. Only on two occasions did the time exceed five seconds, by two seconds.

I was also keen on finding out the percentage of success in finding food in that area, as that would give an idea of the abundance of food. On twenty separate bouts of searching for food one adult sarus crane came up with food on four occasions, a 20% success. The two adult birds took little respite from their effort at finding food and their heads used to be out of water for a very brief period of two to three seconds between each bout of five seconds of assiduous searching for food.

The Sarus Cranes were quite unperturbed by my presence only about twenty five yards away and continued to feed for half an hour, at the end of which they flew away on their own.

'VIKAS BHAVAN',
29-SANKEY ROAD,
BANGALORE-52,
April 22, 1974.

AJAI M. GHORPADE

8. ON THE NESTING HABITS OF THE SMALL MINIVET (*PERICROCOTUS CINNAMOMEUS*)

While glancing through W. Jesse's *On the Birds of Lucknow, Ibis* 1902, p. 541), I was struck by the following note regarding the Small Minivet (*Pericrocotus peregrinus* now *cinnamomeus*):

"A most curious fact in connexion with this bird is that—with, I think, only one or two exceptions at the most—I have always found nests, whether building or with eggs, in possession of *three* birds, *two* females and one male. What is the exact duty of this second wife I cannot make out. Possibly she may be a drudge. That she exists I have satisfied myself time after time, and so convinced are the Martiniere (College—H.A.) boys of the fact that they—no mean observers by the way—rarely troubled to look for a nest if only one female is present".

He goes on to say that he does not think that they both lay eggs,